

Choptank Tributary Team

January 15, 2003

About the Watershed:

The Choptank River is the largest river on the Eastern Shore. It drains approximately 700 square miles and covers portions of Dorchester, Talbot, Caroline, and Queen Anne's Counties. The predominant land uses in the watershed are agriculture and forest with growing urban areas in the Towns of Cambridge, Easton, and Denton. The Choptank Team contends with a wide range of issues associated with agriculture and with the growing population in the watershed.

About the Team:

The mission of the Choptank Tributary Team is to reduce nutrient and sediment inputs and to restore habitat in the Choptank Watershed through community participation. The team is a dedicated group of volunteers who are passionate about their river. A large percentage of the members have remained active on the team since its formation in 1995. Members come from a wide range of backgrounds, including farmers, local watershed groups, businesses, and state and county governments. The team generally focuses on seeking legislative and policy change; however, public education and



outreach and restoration projects are also important team focuses.

Recent Accomplishments:

- * Recognizing the many nutrient and sediment reduction benefits associated with cover crops, the Choptank Team instigated a statewide Tributary Team effort to seek legislation change for Maryland's cover crop program. Through letters and meetings with the Governor and state legislators, the team sought to increase funding for the Eastern Shore program and to establish a statewide program. Although the program was expanded statewide in 2002 and received a funding increase, the team plans to continue to seek full statewide coverage in 2003.
- * During 2001 and 2002, the Choptank Team sought to establish Trappe Creek as an oyster sanctuary and protect the team's oyster and submerged aquatic vegetation restoration sites. Members met with representatives from the Oyster Recovery Partnership, the Talbot Tongers, and the Maryland Department of Natural Resources to discuss the proposal. In May 2002, the parties established an agreement whereby the upper two-thirds of the creek received sanctuary status while the lower one-third of the creek received reserve status. The proposal went into effect in October 2002.



The Choptank Team used more than 100 tons of dredged oyster shell to create an oyster bar in Trappe Creek.

✱ The Choptank Wade-in is held on the third Saturday in June in conjunction with the Boat Bums International Cardboard Boat Races to benefit the Special Olympics. To engage elected officials in the team's activities, members invited elected officials to help lead the wade-in. Congressman Wayne Gilchrest, Senator Richard Colburn, Delegate Adelaide Eckardt, Talbot Commissioner Hilary Spence, and Dorchester Commissioner Tom Flowers have responded to the team's call and participated in the wade-in and the cardboard boat races.

✱ In 2001, Talbot and Dorchester Counties were awarded a grant by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources to prepare an Upper Choptank Watershed Restoration Action Strategy (WRAS). The WRAS is a partnership between the counties and the state to assess the watershed, identify problem areas, and to develop a restoration strategy. Several Choptank Team members are participating in the strategy development and the team plans to assist with the strategy's implementation once it is finalized.

For More Information:

For more information, contact Susan Phelps Larcher, team coordinator, at 410-260-8832. You can also visit our website at www.dnr.state.md.us/bay/tribstrat/.



Elected officials have become regular participants in the Choptank Wade-In.

Team Members

Robert Wieland, Chair, International Economics Washington
 Ken Staver, Vice-Chair, Wye Research & Education Center
 Dave Nemazie, State Contact, University of MD
 Gerald Adams, Easton Utilities
 Jacques Baker, State Mentoring Resource Center
 Ray Clarke, Talbot Dept. of Public Works
 William Collier, Farmer
 Tim Goertemiller, Living Ecosystems
 Al Goetze, Talbot River Protection Assoc.
 David Harris, Caroline Soil Conservation District
 Karen Houtman, Dorchester Planning & Zoning
 Roby Hurley, Citizen
 Richard Hutchison, Farmer
 E.B. James, Pickering Creek Environmental Center
 Don Kerstetter, Trappe Landing Farm & Native Sanctuary
 Betsey Krempasky, Caroline Planning & Zoning
 Ed McNeal, State Highways Administration
 John Melton, Horn Point Laboratory
 Rush Moody, Creek Watchers
 Amy Owsley, Eastern Shore Land Conservancy
 Mark Powell, Delmarva Farmer
 James Price, Chesapeake Bay Ecological Foundation
 Eugene Skinner, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
 Helen Spinelli, Friends of the Great Choptank River
 Craig Zinter, Talbot Soil Conservation District

Team Participants

Ellie Altman, Adkins Arboretum
 Roger Bollman, Citizen
 Deborah Herr Cornwell, Herr Landscape Architecture & Environmental Design
 Nick Carter, Citizen
 Jack King, Talbot Soil Conservation District
 Leonard Slyter, Citizen

Team Coordinator

Susan Phelps Larcher